

Wiretap Column Sparks Charges

By Drew Pearson
and Jack Anderson

Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, speaking in California, has charged the Administration with inspiring our column which revealed that he had ordered the FBI to tap the telephone wire of Dr. Martin Luther King. The column was timed, Bobby charged, so as to influence the Oregon primary.

Instead of inspiring the wiretap column, however, the Administration was so upset over its publication that the Justice Department started an official investigation of Pearson and Anderson.

Sen. Kennedy's answer, incidentally, should have been directed to the question of whether the story was true, not why the story was written.

He knew that we had been reporting on wiretapping and eavesdropping for some years, because he had talked with us about it, especially the series of columns reporting on the FBI bug on lobbyist Fred Black when Kennedy was Attorney General.

There was one error in the column complained about. It indicated that the tap was continued on Dr. King's wire, up until the time of his assassination.

This was incorrect. It was removed in June, 1965, when President Johnson issued an order to all Federal agencies suspending both wiretapping and electronic eavesdropping until there could be a review

of the entire situation. Johnson and his new Attorney General, Ramsey Clark, had discovered wholesale Government eavesdropping, including the tap on Dr. King, and they ordered it stopped.

The King wiretap had been requested by Attorney General Kennedy on July 16, 1963, but the FBI at that time argued him out of it on the ground that Dr. King traveled too much and that repercussions in Negro circles would be bad. Later, in October of 1963, Kennedy prevailed and the tap was placed on Dr. King's telephone.

Probe Requested

Meanwhile, Rep. Joseph Resnick (D-N.Y.) asked the House of Representatives last week to investigate the case of Dr. King's wiretap. Three other Congressmen supported him—Neal Smith (Iowa), Charles Joelson (N.J.), Joseph Vigorito (Pa.) and Claude Pepper (Fla.), all Democrats.

"The fact that a high-ranking official—a member of the President's Cabinet—legally could and actually would order the FBI to bug the telephone of a distinguished American like Dr. King is an affront to the causes to which Dr. King dedicated his life," Resnick said.

"If Martin Luther King's home can be tapped—for no apparent reason—by order of one of the highest officials of Government—and a professed

champion of the liberals—then nobody is safe."

Referring to Bobby Kennedy's lame reply to the King wiretap charges, made through a spokesman, Resnick said: "The American people can hardly consider this 'response by proxy' an adequate one. I suggest a hearing under oath . . . No American wants 'Big Brother' looking over his shoulder, peeping through his keyhole, or listening in on his telephone."

Backing him up, Rep. Joelson pointed out that when he was a district attorney in New Jersey he had to satisfy a judge very carefully before he could issue a search warrant.

"This is a very sensitive area," Joelson said, "and an Attorney General of either political party is subject to political influences. If an Attorney General can tap a wire without any court order, merely on his own say-so, then the right of privacy in this country is gone."

FBI Techniques

This column has now obtained a copy of a secret FBI manual on the placing of secret microphones. The instructions are most revealing and tacitly admit that listening devices must be installed by illegal entry and trespass. The FBI instructions follow:

"Most microphone installations must be effected surreptitiously, making the installation of a microphone in an

ideal location virtually impossible. This results in microphones frequently being placed some distance from the source of sound. If it is not possible to place the diaphragm of the microphone in close proximity to the area that must be covered, an acoustical impedance matching device should be installed . . . wires must be strung from the microphone to the amplifier to carry the minute electrical impulses . . .

The FBI also lists in great detail the best places to hide microphones as follows: behind baseboards; behind power outlets and electrical fixtures; ventilating and heating ducts (to be effective must be concealed so that flow of air will not strike or affect microphone); behind radiators, avoid intense heat; adjacent to service pipes; behind walls (place microphone as near surface of wall inside room as security and time permits); in heavy and seldom-moved furniture; in dummy telephones; in ornamental and large base lamps; in large and seldom-used books; in calendar pads; in picture frames; in doors, locks, door knobs, etc.; in radio, television and intercommunication sets.

"Existing facilities such as telephones, public address systems, intercommunication stations, and speakers in radio and television sets may also be used to perform the microphone function."

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